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Calling all Jeopardy! fans
February trivia on pg. 3

Looking back with love
How objects can spark a memory on pg. 4

Push pause
It's okay to take a break on pg. 6

'Tis the season for paper hearts and a little extra love.
Happy Valentine's Day! /EMILY STONEHOUSE

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The power of family

AT COMMUNITY Living we have all kinds of policy, regulations, laws, and expectations to follow in every corner of our work. It can be overwhelming; however, our guiding principles often help to crystalize our reason for the work we do, our purpose and our why. Last year we printed posters of the guiding principles to make sure that they were visible in all our workplaces.

As I was reflecting on this time of upheaval the poster caught my eye and did exactly as it was designed to do. Reflecting on the guiding principles brought me back to center, slowed me down and got me focused on the here and now and what is important right here in our community.

One jumped out at me as being a crucial reminder for these times. "Families are the fundamental sources of support for their members and a key building block of inclusive communities. Services and supports should be planned for, organized, and delivered in the context of the family. Families are unique and valuable resources to each other as well as effective agents for social change. Agency activities should foster strength, stability, competence, and knowledge that families can offer each other."

I was reminded once about a conference that I went to where I had a chance to talk to a leading therapist and writer in our field. When asked the question whether a family should move to be closer to specialists and solid medical and therapeutic intervention options. His answer was clear, a family should stay where there is more family, where there is a network of support, where there is a community to wrap itself around any situation where someone needs extra support to offer their gifts.

TERESA JORDAN
Community Living Contemplations

Families hold all the memories that made us who we are, they hold our cultural influences of childhood, they can be our biggest supporters and our fiercest champions. Yes, professional support systems are critical, treatments, interventions, and support are important to all of us, however our family can remain constant.

What I am thinking about is that when there is so much going on around us, some uncertainty, some anxieties, where do we look for that centering and calm? Families, friends, neighbours, a circle of support that wraps around us. Mother Teresa is said to have acknowledged that the way to change the world is to love your family. In times of great stress, let's look at where we can have the greatest impact on changing the world. It is in our small circle, where we can make change that ripples out, it is in supporting and being valuable resources to one another in small ways, in our community, together, which almost magically leads to big stability and calm. We all have this superpower to foster strength for one another in our community.

Winter walkers
Hike Haliburton attendees prepare to hit the trails in their snowshoes during Haliburton County's annual winter hiking festival. /TIM YANO

Hike Haliburton attendees adjust to skis during the guided demo on Saturday afternoon at Glebe Park. /ADAM FRISK Special to *County Life*

Februarius

DEB REED

County Life Contributor

I recently chatted with an elderly friend. He kept saying 'many moons ago', a comfy and familiar old idiom. It obviously means 'a long time back', but more literally, it translates as 'many months ago'.

Consumer alert! Continue reading only if you appreciate Jeopardy! or pedantic explanations …

Month has a Germanic origin deriving from moon and from the Latin mensis, or period of time. A month measures one lunar rotation of earth every 29ish days.

The ancient Sumerian calendar contained a traceable set of 12 variable rotations. The Romans also measured months by moon orbits, but applied a 10-month timetable. When astronomers confirmed that 12 distinctive cycles actually did comprise one full year, King Pompilius added two extra months, January and February, to the 10. Julius Caesar later shifted these directly to the front of his official new Julian calendar. The word calendar even derives from Latin for account book, a means of organizing time.

So, December, our modern 12th month, was once the 10th! Its very prefix contains the Latin root for 10. November hides a 9, October, an 8! July and August were also renamed…after two rather obvious Romans!

By the way, Jeopardy! nerds: Caesar is etymologically linked to Czar and to Kaiser!

And speaking of etymology, let's revisit January and February. The latter was named after the ancient Roman purification festival, Februa, where cleansing rituals marked the end of winter. The former comes from Janus, a two-faced Roman deity peering simultaneously at both past and future, and representing beginnings or gateways. He truly symbolized 'out with the old and in with the new!'

February follows January into each new year, repeating the set of twelve lunar cycles. It normally takes the moon 30 to 31 days to orbit the earth, 28 to 29 days in February. Every four years, February takes on an extra 24 hours, compensation - or leap - for the accumulated minutes earth itself requires to fully orbit the sun.

After all this math come rewards. Not only is daylight increasing, official Spring arrives next cycle. We also get to acknowledge Black History Month, Valentine's and Groundhog Days. Toronto folk explore *Winterlicious*, Ottawa's, *Winterlude*, and a myriad opportunities for adventure. Ontario, among other provinces, inserted Family Day into duller February to encourage a bonus long weekend with kin.

Speaking of kin, *The Winter Guest* was a 1997 film directed by Alan Rickman. It starred Emma Thompson and her real-life mother, Phyllida Law. It's set in scenic coastal Scotland during a single eventful day in freezing February. It was one of my last cinema dates with my own mum.

February is a precarious month for some. It might be more popular with snowbirds than with those in our hemisphere who avoid active northern exposure! But it's also closer in the seasonal countdown to the sunrise music of true feathered friends!

Like two-faced Janus, we stoically transition from old to new. We remember *In the Bleak Midwinter* of every February to restart our W*alking on Sunshine*, moon and months for company.

A Hike Haliburton participant takes a break after hiking Bethel Heights Farm to visit one of the youngest critters at the Minden farm. /TIM YANO

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Objects of memory

KATE BUTLER
County Life Contributor

Gord Peteran's family arriving for a summer stay on Mountain Lake, around 1929. This image shows all the belongings they would have brought with them, each one carrying a special meaning - both back then, and today. /FILE

As the old saying goes, "a picture is worth a thousand words", but sometimes we need those words to make sure that the story of a picture isn't forgotten. I'm always delighted to discover that a historic photo comes with a description. Sometimes those captions are painstakingly inscribed on album pages in perfect penmanship, while in other cases, they're hurried scribbles which take a moment (or more) to decipher. When they don't appear, it can mean some detective work. Sometimes the clues slot together to form an easy solution, but in other cases, the mystery lingers.

What about objects? It strikes me that when we look at our own family histories we don't always feel the need to record the stories of objects the same way we do with photos. Those stories are what make many of these objects distinct however. At the Haliburton Highlands Museum, we often say that a very similar item might have been found in Haliburton and also on the other side of the province, but it's the story of who owned it and used it that gives it additional meaning here.

I'd say that many of us have objects which connect us to previous generations in different ways. Sometimes their stories are a little more obvious, but others could be easily lost if they aren't shared. One item I have is a locket which my great-grandmother gave to my grandmother when she was a teenager. The front is decorated with flowers, while the back has my grandmother's initials inscribed in a flowing script. My grandmother was named for her father, who in turn was named for his uncle, but that's a whole other story. Inside, my grandmother's locket still has the pictures she placed in it - on one side, a picture of my great-grandparents and on the other, a picture of my grandfather. With a little knowledge, the story of this item might be fairly easy to put together, but others might be more of a challenge without the stories which were also passed down. For instance, I have a couple of long beaded necklaces which belonged to my grandmother's eldest sister. Aunt Jen had a passion for fashion, which she indulged wherever and whenever she could. Those necklaces graced family gatherings, parties and many, many dancefloors and even just looking at them makes me think of my great-aunt.

Sometimes the meaning of objects comes to us through stories alone. When my mother was a child, her grandfather had a roll top desk, which according to her always smelled of his pipe tobacco, and the smell would waft out as he opened it. I never met my great-grandfather, but knowing that story makes me think of him everytime I see a desk like that (and it makes me want to open every roll top desk, because part of me expects them all to smell like my great-grandfather's pipe tobacco.)

Objects carry with them stories that can connect us to the past and from which we can glean meaning and connections. Think about the ones that have meaning for you, your family and your friends and take some time to write the stories down, record them or even just share them with someone else to make sure that significance of those objects isn't forgotten. It's a perfect project for winter afternoons and the future will thank you - have fun!

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Haliburton Home Hardware Building Centre's February Artist feature - Tamarack Glass

Tamarack Glass is a collaborative glassblowing couple in Gooderham. They make functional glass art from borosilicate glass using torches, tools, and a glassblowing lathe. Their glass interests have grown over the years but are inspired by the lifestyle of the Haliburton Highlands.

Mitch, also known as @Nez_glass on Instagram took his glass passion from hobby to start a professional career at Kitras Art Glass in Fergus, Ontario, in 2015. He is now enjoying a career teaching classes and concentrating on sculptural art at his home studio with his family.

Steph, also known as @Rayenglass on Instagram started as a scientific glass blower in 2009 at LaSalle Scientific in Guelph. She has accomplished many feats in her 12-year scientific career. She now enjoys spending her time at her home studio making custom art.

Their display will be in store for the month of February! It features glass straws, pendants, shot glasses, decorative items and more! Available for cash purchase. Custom pieces available.

Colour Featured; *Minuette*

Submitted

Steph and Mitch pictured with their display in Haliburton Home Hardware, and furry friends Bow and Arrow. /submitted

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Send your letters to the editor to emily@haliburtonpress.com. Letters must be signed and include a phone number.

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Take a break

EMILY STONEHOUSE
County Life Editor

HERE'S A break for you.

A break from the borderline apocalyptic talk that's running rampant these days. Everywhere I turn, it feels hard to escape. Our friends in the south are struggling. The world is quite literally burning. We have no idea what we should be buying from our grocery stores.

It's a mess.

So here's a break for you.

Yes, you. Right now. Lower your shoulders. Unclench your jaw. Take the deepest breath you've taken all day.

I think many of us are feeling on-edge. But keeping our bodies in a state of tension isn't going to help anyone.

Sometimes I feel like I am failing if I don't address the current state of the world. Like people won't take me seriously; passing by on their way to their worries while my head digs deeper into the sand.

But sometimes we need a break.

We are truly not designed to process this much information, this quickly. We used to be able to shut it off. To walk away from the reality of the world with one click of a switch. And suddenly, silence. Sweet, sweet silence.

But now it follows us; our idle fingers seeking a jittery rush as we scroll. All day and all night. Unable to pry our glazed-over eyes from the trainwreck.

So here's my reminder that you're not a failure if you need a break. If you'd like to walk away for a bit. You can push pause. It's not your sole responsibility to gather knowledge and educate. You're allowed to take a break in the sand.

This week is Valentine's Day. And while I know it's not everyone's favourite, it's always made me happy.

It's the first celebratory event after New Year's; and in my eyes, it's just sweet.

Where so many holidays and events get lost in consumerism, gifts, and clutter, I find Valentine's to be simple.

We spend the days leading up to Valentine's cutting white and pink hearts out of felt and construction paper, and strewing them across our fireplace mantle. We pull out our ragged red teddy bears with hearts on their paws, and sip fizzy cranberry juice from the fancy glasses.

We celebrate love. And not just the love between partners, but the love we have in our family. For one another, for our furry friends, for the plants we've named that sit proudly in our frosted windowsills (here's looking at you, Barb), for the people who make our world turn.

And while the world burns around us, I think we can all take a moment to recognize the love that exists in our circles. It doesn't have to be flashy, doesn't have to be bold, doesn't have to burn bright.

I can just simply, be.

So here's your reminder to take a break. Turn off. Let go. And turn to the simple things that surround us every day.

Happy Valentine's Day to you, our readers. Here's to pushing pause and finding a little love today. Whatever that looks like to you, I hope it's sweet.

Top 10 things a lot of snow is good for

STEVE GALEA
Humour Columnist

WELL, WE are flying through the month of February. With that comes more snow, and more complaints from people about it. I'm not a great fan of this much snow either, but I have tried to look at the bright side of it recently. So, here are the top 10 things that snow is good for:

1. Creating Air B and Bs for visiting northerners.
2. As proof positive that your dogs urinary and digestive tracts are in good working order.
3. As a parts department for your snowman repair shop.
4. Provides the material for you to create an intricate maze that leads to your secret winter refrigerator.
5. The shovel and snowblower industry.
6. Makes snowshoers look a lot less silly.
7. A real boon for shovelling enthusiasts.
8. Softens the fall when you slip on the accompanying ice.
9. Hiding the immovable objects you are about to stub your toes on.
10. Snow cones … in any colour but yellow.

Snowflakes

Snowflakes floating in slow motion through morning Air,
a dove-winged Sky, molting layers, 'till the palest of grey remains, the white orb of Sun,
illuminating their flight,
the snowflakes, swirls of light, that glitter like stardust as they whirl through Air,
appearing as if out of nowhere,
millions of them, freefalling without knowing where they will land,
as I stand at the window, watching the silent flight of snowflakes, not a single pair collides,
my eyes, mesmerized,
marveling that they don't bump into one another, like people sometimes do, elbows, jabbing, in a crowded room,
so many of them, stippling Air, like peering through a curtain of lace,
the snowflakes, softening edges and smudging the world Outside,
the pair of blue spruces, standing alongside one another their entire lives, cloaked in the thinnest coat of Snow,
each morning I peer out at them, thinking of them as a couple, one blue spruce slightly taller than the other,
the space between them, wide enough, to let the other grow,
Wind blowing through their branches, that flap like giant wings, a squirrel scampering through the Snow,
past the pair of spruces, up the trunk of a naked maple, its tail swishing as it shimmies up and up,
clutching something between its front paws, and I wonder whether it's for itself or a gift for another squirrel,
the curtain of snowflakes, blurring it, as it disappears from view, and I glance back at the pair of blue spruces,
the shadows of their trunks, stretching across Snow, how solid and rooted they appear,
their silent camaraderie keeping the other company, year after year,
while snowflakes whirl past them, uncertain where they will land, some of them,
sparkling like diamonds in the Snow,
others, veiling the limbs of maples and willows, or falling into pieces of Rivers that still flow,
the white flakes dissolving into the blackness, their journey, brief, between Sky and ground,
the sound of their silence, amplified by how slowly some of them float through Air,
one of them pausing at the windowpane, peering inside at a world it doesn't recognize,
knowing only Air and light,
I place my hand on the glass, as Wind carries it away, my eyes trying to follow the path of its flight,
but it blends in with the other snowflakes and I lose sight of it within a few seconds,
they all look the same, but magnified, no two are alike, like a stranger that catches my eye,
sometimes, in a crowd,
in the space of three blinks, they're gone, swept up in the flurry of being human,
rushing to get somewhere, sometimes without going anywhere.
I stand by the window, watching the snowflakes drift through Air, in no hurry to go anywhere,
wondering where they will land, the uncertainty, enhancing the beauty of their brief journey.

Sylvie Kalenda

Wishing you a healthy 2025!

The Believe in the Magic campaign wraps up what has been an incredible 12 months, and we thank the many donors who generously supported us throughout the year. With the success of the Here for You in the Highlands Campaign, we invested in vital diagnostic imaging equipment for HHHS and we continue to provide subsidies for Meals on Wheels, transportation through Community Support Services and funding for essential equipment needs in the hospital and long-term care facilities in Haliburton County. Your gift makes an impact all year long. We are grateful for your support.

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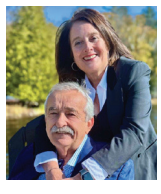

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Nature in your backyard

County Life welcomes photo submissions depicting life in the Highlands. Email emily@ haliburtonpress.com. Please ensure images are high resolution - 200 dpi, 10 inches at its longest edge.

Trumpeter Swan by Randy Moratz

Chickadee by Jill Moulton

Deer by Tammy Nash

Lonely Goose by Randy Moratz

Legion Events

Branch 441 Kinmount

Monday: Bid euchre 1 p.m.
Cornhole 7 p.m. (upstairs)
Ladies darts 7:30 p.m. (downstairs)
Tuesday: Coffee and chat 9 to 10:30 a.m.
Wednesday: Coffee and chat 9 to 10:30 a.m. Mixed darts 7:30 p.m. Canteen opens at 6 p.m.
Thursday: General meeting (3rd week) Members only 7:30 p.m.
Friday: Chair yoga 10 a.m. Bingo, doors open at 5 p.m. Supper special every week. Canteen opens at 4 p.m.
Saturday: Meat draw 5 p.m. Canteen opens at 3 p.m.
Sunday: Ladies Auxiliary meeting (members only) third Sunday every month at 2 p.m.
We welcome everyone to our events and we look forward to seeing you.

Branch 129 Haliburton

Mondays: Bridge 1 p.m. Schofield Rm. Youth darts 6:30 to 8 p.m. Clubroom 10 to 18 years of age. All are welcome, no experience necessary
Tuesdays: League darts 7 p.m.
Wednesdays: Bid Euchre 1 p.m. start – Main Hall. Bingo doors open at 6 p.m. Bingo starts at 7 p.m. First Wed of each month - $1000 jackpot, rest will be a $500 jackpot.
Follow Facebook.com/Branch129 Bingo for the most up-to-date information
Thursdays: General Meeting third Thursday of the month, 6:30 p.m. All members urged to attend.
Ladies Auxiliary last Thursday of the month at 1 p.m.
Fridays: Five meat draw, five prizes each draw, first draw 4:30 p.m., last draw 6:30 p.m. Tickets $2 per draw. Paul Sisson, MC. Friday fun darts from 4:30 p.m. and onwards. 50/50 Draw 5:40 p.m.
Whether you're planning a function for 10 or 200, call Cheryl Waller at 905-447-7741, email haliburtonlegionrentals@gmail.com or visit haliburtonlegion.com. Everyone is welcome!
Club room hours: Mon. 3 to 6 p.m., Tues. 3 to 9 p.m., Wed/Thurs. 3 to 6 p.m. Fri. 3 to 7 p.m.

Branch 636 Minden

Lunch - Monday to Friday
Monday: Rug Hookers every second week. Bid Euchre 1 to 3 p.m.
Tuesday: Food 5 p.m. Canoe FM Bingo 6 p.m.
Thursday: Cribbage 1 to 3 p.m., Darts 7 to 9 p.m. and Euchre 7 to 9 p.m.
Every other Friday: Karaoke 8 to 11 p.m.
Friday Fish & Chips, Wings. Lunch 11a.m. to 2 p.m. and Dinner 4 to 7 p.m.
Saturday All Day Breakfast 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with three Meat draws at 11 a.m.
Call ahead any day for take-out:
705-286-4541. Schedules are subject to change without notice. Check our Facebook page Minden Legion Branch 636 for more info.

Branch 624 Wilberforce

Hours - Sunday: Special Events Only, Monday: 7 to 10 p.m., Tuesday: Closed, Wednesday: 2 to 6 p.m., Thursday: 7 to 10 p.m., Friday: 2 to 11 p.m., Saturday: 2 to 9 p.m.
Mondays - Feb. 17, 24 - Darts $5/player - 7 p.m.
Wednesdays - Feb. 19, 26 - Darts $4/player, 2 p.m.
Thursdays - Feb. 13, 20, 27 - Cornhole $5/player, 7 p.m.
Fridays - Feb. 21 -Fish n Chips, 5 to 8 p.m. $15
Feb. 14 - Valentine's Day Dinner
Chicken Marsala with salad, mashed potatoes, veggies and dessert. $20, 5 to 8 p.m.
Feb. 14, 28 Seniors 55+ Lunch, $17, Non
Feb. 28 -Wings and Jam, $15/lb, 5 to 8 p.m.
Saturdays - Feb. 15, 22 Meat Draw, 3 p.m
Feb. 15 - Valentine's Day Dance, Food provided.
8 p.m. to 1 a.m.
Feb. 22 - Ken McFarlane Ice Fishing Derby. Weigh in is at 6 p.m.. Registration is $20

Fisher by Tammy Nash

Nuthatch by Jill Moulton

Community Events

Send your event listing to classifieds@haliburtonpress.com

Minden Ice Races Schedule 2025
When: Feb. 15-16, 22-23, and Mar. 1-2
Where: Minden Fairgrounds
Spectator admission is free. Races begin at 9 a.m. on Saturdays and 11 a.m. on Sundays.
Experience adrenaline-packed racing on a frozen track!

"Understanding Addictions: How to give support through challenging times"
When: Tuesday, Feb. 18 at 7 p.m.
Where: Schofield Room, Haliburton Legion,
719 Mountain St., Haliburton
A discussion with community members of Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous, who will tell us some of their stories and the 12-step path as a road to recovery. A continuing series on "Making our Communities Better Places", and will be opened with music by Rich Anton and Gord Kidd. Open to all, no admission charge, light refreshments provided. Hosted by the Baha'i community of Haliburton.

Growing Food from Seed
When: March 4, 1 p.m.
Where: Minden Community Center,
55 Parkside St. Minden
Do you love gardening? Join the Minden & District Horticultural Society at the Minden Community Center, 55 Parkside St. Minden. Guest speaker Diana Westland will be discussing 'Growing Food from Seed ', followed by the monthly society meeting. New members welcome!

Youth Unlimited Gym Nights
When: Mar. 7 - Sports and Dodgeball 6:30 to 9 p.m.
Apr. 4 - Sports and 9 Square 6:30 to 9 p.m.
Where: Haliburton Highlands Secondary School
For Grades 6-12. For more info contact haliburton@youthunlimitedkaw.com.

Recurring events

Cards/Euchre/Cribbage
When: Thursdays at 2:30 p.m.
Where: St. George's Church
617 Mountain Street
Lakeside Church Service
When: Sunday at 9 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.
Where: 9 Park Street, Haliburton.
Whoever you are, wherever you've been, you are welcome here.

Weekly Meat Rolls
When: Every Saturday, 3 p.m.
Where: Coboconk Legion, Hwy 48 and 35
Join us for our weekly meat draw. Five spins for $10. First four rounds are for highest and lowest score with two winners per round. Last round is for a prepare-it-yourself dinner for two. Additional spins for this round are available for $2 each. Call 705-454-8127 or email info@coboconklegion.ca for more information. **TOPS: Take Off Pounds Sensibly**
When: Monday mornings 9:30 to 11 a.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion Branch 129, upper level
Admission: Yearly membership of $59
A non-profit/commercial network of weight-loss support groups, offers programs for healthy living and weight management.

Bridge for Seniors
When: Mondays at 1 p.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Schofield Room
All welcome

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With
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Sunday, Feb 16
3-6pm. All Welcome

Red Truck Red Ale

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Caesar Sunday
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North of Seven
Sunday, Feb 23
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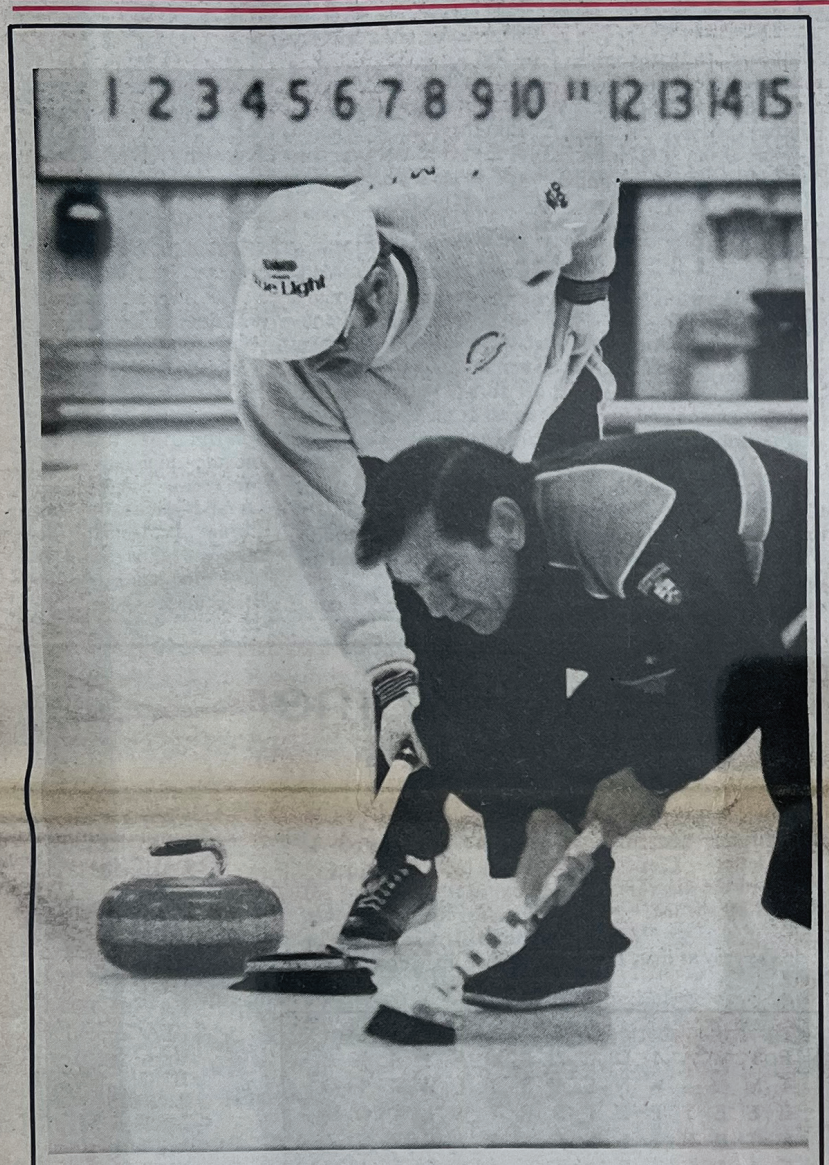

The Minden Curling Club was host to three days of intense competition on January 6, 7 and 8 when it hosted the Ontario Curling Association Men's Provincial Tankard Zone Playdowns. The two Minden teams competing in the event played well, but not well enough to advance to the regional competition in Kingston. Two Peterborough rinks succeeded in winning in Minden and were to have represented and were to have represented the zone this past weekend in Kingston.

CHANGE brings recycling to Highlands

Within two days Haliburton County residents will have a convenient way of recycling old cans, newspapers and glass and plastic bottles.

The County of Haliburton Association for a Naturally Good Environment (CHANGE) has arranged for a huge four-compartment bin to be placed at the Haliburton landfill site, where recyclable materials can be deposited. Bess Zwecher, one of the core group of CHANGE, said Don Coates of Muskoka Containerized Services donated the bin to the county for the next six months. It will be arriving this Wednesday and there will be a bit of a ceremony at the site at 1 p.m.

Because Haliburton County Council is now entering into a three-year waste management study, it is unlikely that local municipalities will be initiating recycling programs in the near future. With this in mind, CHANGE members decided to see what they could do to make recycling more convenient.

Many cottagers pack up their recyclable wastes and bring them home to be recycled. Zwecher says there are many who wish to recycle and the arrival of this bin will make it possible.

While the bin itself is being provided rent free, there will be a cost to have it taken over to Bracebridge to be emptied. Each trip will cost about $120 which is being raised through donations from individuals.

The key to making this temporary program a success is by using the bins properly. There are four compartments to the bin. One is for tin and aluminum cans, which should be crushed to conserve space in the compartment. Another is for newspapers, which should be bundled to avoid them blowing out and making a mess of the entire area. The third compartment will be for the large plastic pop bottles, which should also be crushed to save space.

The final compartment is for glass bottles and jars. The lids should be removed from these and they should be rinsed out.

The container will be open to everyone in the county during the hours that the dump site is open. The Haliburton dump is located just off Highway 121.

Minden vying for a bin

The news that a recycling bin is being placed at the Haliburton landfill site has spurred Anson, Hindon and Minden Townships Council to try and find out if a second bin could be placed at one of the Minden landfill sites.

At last Thursday's council meeting, Deputy Reeve Bern Berry said it would be more convenient to residents of this side of the county is another bin could be placed at the Scotch Line Landfill site. He suggested that council contact representatives of the County of Haliburton Association for a Naturally Good Environment (CHANGE) to find out if this would be possible.

The bin that is being placed in Haliburton was arranged for by CHANGE and will be available to all residents of the county who are interested in recycling their garbage. The four-compartment bin is to arrive this Wednesday and has been donated by Muskoka Containerized Services.

Weather claims fifth Minden Derby

Trail is 'solid ice' from start to finish

The fifth running of the Minden Martin Sled Dog Derby has fallen victim to the weather. The race organizing committee announced the cancellation Wednesday afternoon after carefully examining the trail.

Steve Lougheed, Trail Boss for the derby, and his wife Val, who is the Race Governor, decided to close down the derby because of the treacherous conditions on the trail. "It is virtually solid ice from one end of the trail to the other," Steve Lougheed said Wednesday afternoon after a final inspection of the four and eight mile trails. He said running a race under these conditions would pose too great a risk to dogs and drivers.

"We have an obligation to the safety of the animals and the drivers," Val Lougheed commented. She pointed out that the Minden derby had, over the past four years, earned a reputation for the quality of the race and course. "We didn't want to jeopardize the integrity we have built up over those four years," she said.

Both Val and Steve are participants in sled dog racing and after examining the trails on Wednesday, agreed they would not run their own teams under the conditions which prevailed on the trails and therefore could not, in good conscience, ask others to risk their dogs on the course.

The decision to cancel the race Wednesday seemed to be underlined by Mother Nature on Thursday when mild temperatures brought rain and more melting of what little snow there was along the trail. The conditions confirmed what the committee had done the day before.

In four years, the Minden Sled Dog Derby has grown into a major winter tourism attraction. Racers come from throughout North America to take part in the race. This year's purse of $20,000 provided by Martin Pet Foods of Elmira had attracted an even higher calibre of participants. The event has gained a reputation in the racing community for the excellent organization, challenging trails, and the excitement that comes with a main street start and finish. For most of the spectators, the spectacle of the excited dogs being led to the starting line is a popular one. The colour and noise of the sled dog derby has attracted increased attention each year.

According to Val Lougheed, the organizing committee laboured long and hard over the decision to cancel the race. "We

(more on page 23)

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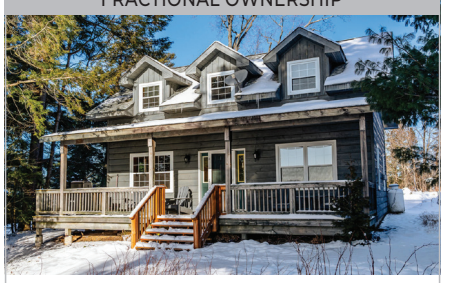

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